



## **Zealous Bios for Mississippi**

***Scott Hechinger, Founder and Executive Director, Zealous:*** For nearly a decade, Scott served as a public defender in Brooklyn, representing people charged with crimes who couldn't afford an attorney, but also long shared his perspective as a public defender outside of court in a variety of media to shift the narrative and drive systemic change.

While practicing, Scott co-founded the [Brooklyn Community Bail Fund, which freed thousands of people caged pretrial solely because they couldn't afford to buy their freedom](#). After years of practice, Scott was appointed Director of Policy leading creative defender advocacy, as well as design and implementation of multiple new media advocacy films and campaigns, including [We Have Rights](#) (immigration nationally), [Justice is Blindfolded](#) (laws that allowed prosecutors to withhold evidence in New York), [Power of Prosecutors](#) (national Get Out the Vote effort for DA races); and [Perpetual Punishment](#) (collateral consequences nationwide).

Scott founded and now Executive Directs Zealous to build on the successes of the model developed at Brooklyn Defender Services and the promise of non-traditional legal advocacy, media and movements for defenders, social justice leaders, communities, and artists. Scott speaks widely, lectures at law schools and universities, advises companies and organizations on criminal justice media projects and campaigns, and his work and commentary are regularly featured in a range of major national and local outlets. Scott serves as Lecturer-In-Law at Columbia University Law School.

***Crystal Maloney, Managing Director, Zealous:*** Crystal is an attorney, social media strategist, and social justice advocate. Prior to Zealous, Crystal worked on indigent defense cases in Oregon, provided legal support to protesters, and developed social media strategies to amplify justice issues and shift the narrative on how they are discussed. As Managing Director, she leads Zealous's multi-disciplinary work across the country with social justice practitioners, people directly impacted by the criminal legal system, organizers, and artists working to end mass criminalization. Crystal is also a member of the Oregon Justice Resource Center's Lawyers' Committee, which provides amicus assistance to cases in Oregon that present significant social justice issues.

***Alejo Rodriguez, Director of Collaborative Advocacy, Zealous:*** Alejo is a poet, teacher, and advocate. His poetry and writing work appears in *Outlaw Bible of American Poetry* and *Doing Time: 25 Years of PEN Prison Writer Awards*. Alejo is the winner of several PEN awards, and a Teaching Artist for Tribeca Film Institute's screening series at Otisville Correctional Facility. He is also the co-screenwriter of a short film entitled *Unbecoming*. Alejo has prior criminal justice experience having served time in prison in New York. His struggles with parole and legal discoveries were [published](#) in the February 2019 CUNY Law Review issue. As Director of Collaborative Advocacy at Zealous Alejo



oversees the intersectionality of Zealous' collaborations with social justice practitioners and the communities they serve with a focal point to ensure the integrity of human-centered engagement strategies as a means of actualizing true community-based advocacy.